Fast-track

New Zealand Government
Te Kāwanatanga o Aotearoa

MINUTE 3 OF THE PANEL CONVENER

Advising of the Expert Panel Appointments and Decision Timeframe

FTAA – 2608 – 1290

22 October 2026

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[1] Tahimana Ltd seeks approval to develop land located on Stagecoach Rd, Tasman, for approximately 141 homes across a range of densities, supported by a public reserve, walking connections, waterway and wetland restoration, and associated subdivision and infrastructure works.

[2] A conference was held on Thursday 15 October 2026. I am grateful for the detailed memoranda filed in advance of the conference. A list of persons who attended the conference is attached to this minute. Having considered the matters raised at the conference, I record in this minute my decisions on:

(a) the timeframe for the expert panel to deliver its decision; and
(b) the persons appointed to the expert panel.

Tasman District Council

[3] Tasman District Council is a unitary authority.

[4] This application was first lodged in April 2024 under the Resource Management Act but was then withdrawn and refiled under the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024. The District Council has a good understanding of the proposal and did not identify any information gaps at the conference.

[5] Between the lodgement of the application and the conference, there was no engagement between the applicant and the District Council.

Local owners/occupiers and community groups

[6] I note the applicant's assessment that there are approximately 60 adjacent owners and occupiers of land. The extent of engagement with other participants who must be invited to comment was not clear from the information before me. The applicant has engaged with representatives from the local community group Tasman Area Community Association, and this is recorded in the application.

Ngā Rūnanga

[7] Attached to the application are reports prepared by Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Tama and Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Rārua. The applicant advises that it has not received any response to the proposed conditions attached to the application but considers that the application responds to the recommendations made by those rūnanga in the Cultural Values Assessment and Cultural Impact Assessment filed with the application. A third rūnanga, Te Rūnanga o Ngāti Kuia Trust, representing Ngāti Kuia, has indicated that it is likely to comment on the application.

[8] As I have not heard from the rūnanga, I am not in a position to assess how much time or what processes may be required to address their concerns.

Capacity constraints

[9] The participants have identified constraints on the availability of staff, counsel and consultants both before and during the summer holiday period. Details about the persons affected will be provided to the panel directly.

[10] At the conference, the constraints included:

(a) Tasman District Council officers are implementing the Planning Act transitional consenting provisions in October 2026;
(b) a key Tasman District Council staff member being on leave from 24 October 2026 to 9 November 2026 and from 29 January to 9

February 2027; and

(c) several of the applicant's experts being on leave from 15 January to 7 February 2027.

[11] 6 November 2026 had been identified as the nominal date for panel commencement.[1] Following the conference, I suggested to the applicant and the District Council that the panel appointment date be delayed. The purpose of the short delay was to avoid periods when either the District Council staff or the applicant's experts are unavailable or their capacity is significantly reduced. The applicant objects to any delay, noting that it would be impacted if required to respond to comments around Nelson Anniversary Day and Waitangi Day.[2] I was informed today that the applicant has updated its advice and, as it transpires, several experts, including counsel, are on leave between 1 February and 15 February 2027.

[12] The District Council advises that, notwithstanding its constraints, it can file comments within 20 working days if the nominal date for panel commencement is retained (6 November). Be that as it may, for the reasons discussed at the conference, I wish to avoid a situation in which the District Council finds itself with insufficient time and must seek leave from the panel to file supplementary reports under s 67. If this were to occur it would be quite inefficient.

[13] The impact of the summer holidays should have been anticipated. The timeframe for a decision cannot be extended. Consequently, it was important that the participants worked to identify, narrow and resolve the issues in contention, preferably before the panel was appointed.

[14] The appointment date will be 23 November 2026. This date best suits the work commitments of the panel members. Proactive engagement with the District

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[1] Convener Conference Minute dated 7 October 2027

[2] Joint memorandum of District Council and applicant dated 21 October 2026.

Council, iwi and others before comments are filed should minimise disruption to leave, particularly for those persons engaged on the "matters of detail" identified by the District Council. If the applicant needs more time to respond to comments, it can apply for a suspension.

Timeframe for a decision

[15] The applicant proposed a decision timeframe of 45 working days. I am not satisfied that this would allow sufficient time given that post-lodgement engagement with the District Council was initiated after the conference and most of the issues that the Council identified remain under discussion.

[16] The application appears straightforward.[3] While the District Plan policies anticipate this type of development in this general area, the District Council has raised issues concerning the scale and intensity of the development and its urban design and housing outcomes. Whether those issues and other issues raised by the District Council can be adequately addressed through conditions, as suggested by the applicant, is a matter for the panel. It may be that amendments to the application will be required.

[17] I have considered the other processes identified by the applicant to narrow or reduce the principal issues in contention. The applicant suggested that expert conferencing could take place shortly after comments are received. If the nominal date for panel commencement were retained, as the applicant requested, many of its experts would be on leave. This has not been factored into its proposed 45

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[3] In its memorandum filed in advance of the conference, the District Council identified the principal issues in contention and those issues capable of resolution through conditions of approval. I have asked the EPA to provide the panel with a copy of that memorandum, as it provides a snapshot of the current issues, together with a copy of the joint memorandum dated 21 October.

working day timeframe. In any event, I consider that time should be allowed for the panel to consider the comments received and, if it considers conferencing appropriate, to identify the matters to be addressed by the experts.

[18] Therefore, having regard to the matters identified in s 79(2) of the Act, and the matters raised at the conference, I set a timeframe of 60 working days for the panel's decision**.**

[19] The panel will be appointed on 23 November 2026. For the purposes of s 53 of the Act, the panel will commence its consideration of the application on 30 November 2026. The panel will invite comments from participants by 14 December 2026; comments will be due by 1 February 2027. The applicant's response will be due by 9 February 2027. The decision on the application will be due on 30 April 2027, subject to any suspension of processing under s 60 of the Act.

[20] The decision may be released sooner, if the panel does not require this time.

The panel

[21] The following persons will be appointed to the panel:

(a) Alan Webb KC (Chair);
(b) Angela Jones; and
(c) Hamish Lowe.

[22] All panel members have the knowledge, skills, and expertise relevant to the approvals sought in the substantive application. I am satisfied that, collectively, the panel will have an appropriate understanding of, and experience in relation to te ao Māori.

[23] Finally, I have satisfied myself as to their availability and capacity, and that no conflicts of interest have been disclosed.



Jane Borthwick
Panel convener for the purpose of the Fast-track Approvals Act 2024

Schedule A: List of attendees at the panel convener's conference on 15 October 2026.

Applicant (Tahimana Limited)	Sally Gepp (Sally Gepp KC)
	Simon Collett (Tahimana Limited)
	Gina Grimwood (Tahimana Limited)
	Jackie McNae (Staig & Smith)
	Darrin Canton (Staig & Smith)
	David Carlson-McColl (Envirolink Limited)
	Emily Roper (RMA Ecology)
Tasman District Council	Leif Pigott
	Jenna Wolter

Memorandum filed in advance of the conference can be found here:

Conferences, workshops and hearings